

# A Review on Impact of COVID-19 on Education in India

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**Abstract:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, various professions are affected. Teaching is one of the profession which was not only affected but also has seen drastic change in the general day-to-day execution of the job. As technology has taken over in various ways in the teaching fraternity; to cope with this change while managing stress is not very easy task for most of the professors. In this paper, we will see the effects of pandemic on the profession in various ways.

**Keywords—***Pandemic; Education; Teaching; COVID-19*

## I. INTRODUCTION:

The Pandemic we all know as COVID-19 has spread over the world. The same in various ways have affected populated countries, like India, by the impact of it. Be it health, economy, social connections, businesses, traveling and what not. The whole thing leads to stress and anxiety. This short paper focuses on one more factor that is impacted – Education System, mainly with College Teachers' perspective. Various thought processes and brainstorming has happened to sort this out, but the overall effect on system may permanently remain the same.

## II. THE BEGINNING:

At the end of March 2020, the world was witnessing the challenge of COVID-19, India declared lockdown which, everyone thought may last for few weeks. But it was not the case. Education system was not perfectly ready to cope with this sudden change and more often remained still, for a while. When lockdown extensions were declared, the challenge was not only to complete the syllabus but also to conduct exams. Many different digital platforms were tested and adapted to somewhat deal with the task.

It was indeed a stressful situation for teachers without prior experience with new technology – to learn the tools, to create digital contents, to teach the students who are not physically in front to them. On top of that, Work from Home; most of the teachers find it difficult to adapt the home environment for teaching. Considering the distractions and network issues, it was indeed difficult in the beginning. After few weeks, all somehow became familiar with these and teaching pattern was back on track.

Not only teaching, other issues were also emerging with this change. Like reduced student attendance, dealing with new ways to have class control, because being online and maintaining the teaching speed for given amount of time. On top of it, personally there are various factors that teachers faced; one being the COVID-19 infection itself. It was very hard, to face the depression of saving oneself as

well as family from the virus and same time coping with the changes in the system. Other issue of worry was to meet the economic ends as most of the teachers in India are on contract basis, salary cut-offs and job security was stressful to imagine. Those who were away from family also coping with loneliness and anxiety problems. Through all this, system was trying to get a way out.

## III. THE MIDDLE:

As the time passed, all became familiar with this online teaching-learning process, the virus spread was in control for most of the areas, and schools, colleges were allowed to open. One major factor then was to safely carry this process as virus was not entirely vanished, regulations needed to be followed while reopening. Social Distancing, Sanitization and Mask became the new normal. Ever since the lockdown was announced, institutes were closed and now the system was trying to be on track again. Meanwhile exam pattern was changed, most of school exams were cancelled, college exams conducted online with reduced marks and mild paper patterns. The new challenge was to instill back the seriousness and urgency towards knowledge in students minds. Again, the challenge was accepted and we reopened physical education with restrictions. Most of the schools and colleges were on partial mode; as partial offline and partial online teaching. Stress was there but main challenge was to impart education to all. Network issue and infrastructure was another hurdle for most of institutes especially for the rural areas. Still, recording lectures, digital content sharing came to an aid in this situation.

## IV. THE NOW:

After almost one and a half year from the previous lockdown announcement, now, in September-October 2021 we are again in same situation where actually condition is worsen, Some areas are facing the third wave of COVID-19. Before that in the month of March- April, several States gone through lockdown and second wave of COVID was on going. The second wave affected more age groups than previous. Educational Institutions are still shut down for physically calling students in college and teachers are facing the same challenges again. The only better thing is that the teaching fraternity has faced the same type of situation before, so they are ready to take on challenge. But the stress has changed the faces, as spread is more than ever, health issues will be more of a worry. It is unknown that when the institutions will reopen and will it become

normal again? Another question is that ‘What if the current system is the “new normal”?’.

In India, there are various initiatives by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) for secondary and higher education are made, which gives a ray of hope in the difficult times during this situation; few of them are listed below:

- **e-Pathshala:** This is an e-learning platform created by NCERT for the students of class 1 to class 12. One main feature is that, the app is available in multiple languages; this contains study material like videos, audios, book etc. Multilingual support helps not only students and educators to grasp the content but also to the parents of students to understand how the platform works.
- **Diksha:** Is the portal which provides e-learning content based on the curriculum for students and educators; the content includes videos, worksheets, textbooks as well as assessments. It is also the creation of NCERT. The mobile of of Diksha is also available for offline use. The e-content database of Diksha has more than 80000 e-books for classes 1 to 12.
- **Swayam:** This is the national online education platform which has more than 1900 different courses which covers not only the school curriculum from class 1 to 12 but also the higher education like under and post graduate programs. The subjects included are Humanities, Engineering and Social Science as well. The main feature is that, Swayam is integrated with conventional Education; as the credits gathered in Swayam course can be transferred to the curriculum (max 20%).
- **e-PG Pathshala :** As the name suggests, it is the platform dedicated to post graduate students. The platform includes e-books, online courses and study materials during the lockdown period. One important aspect is that, students can access the material even they have lost internet connectivity for the whole day.



## V. SOME KEY IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 ON EDUCATION:

### *Positives:*

- **Blended Learning has emerged:** Blended mode has been adopted by most of the educational institutes which has encouraged teachers and students to educate them with technology. The curriculum development is also improved because assessment and delivery of knowledge has changed. The number of learners also improved because of the use of blended learning.
- **Digital Literacy has improved:** As more and more technological advancements are emerging to cope with situation, the amount of digitally literate teachers and students is also improved. Which helps for teachers to work in collaboration with other teachers, helps students to complete their tasks by online collaboration with other classmates. The content sharing need has also risen the use of electronic media sharing applications like emails, cloud sharing, messaging applications etc. This digital literacy also leads to provide worldwide exposure by providing opportunity to both learner and educator to interact with the global peers.
- **Increased use of Learning Management Systems:** Use of LMS has grown by the institutions, as they help manage and organize the content as well as time schedule. This opened doors for companies who were developing such LMSs and given them the opportunity to improve on the same.
- **Better Time Management:** During the pandemic students are attending online lectures, hence the time management is better for both students and teachers as compared to the offline mode. It helps students to utilize saved time in other hobbies and extra studies.
- **ODL Demand has increased:** As internet speed have increased and various Open Distance Learning (ODL) mode platforms are encouraging for self-learning and providing prominent options like certification courses, the demand of such courses has drastically increased.

### *Negatives:*

- **Employment number has hampered:** Job market has been shaken by the impact of COVID-19. It leads to the drastic shortage of students' enrollment in colleges for higher education. Which also has affected the demand of professors in such institutes. The struggle for food becomes more important that going for education. And this leads to frustration on taking education.
- **Education activity has affected:** As an effect of COVID-19, many school and college students have lost 2-3 months of academic year from their curriculum. This caused loss of interest in education for students, as well as some teachers suffered economically during the period. As a

result of this loss of time, schools and colleges revised the schedule and as a result quality of education hampered.

- **Increase in parents' responsibility towards the students:** As teaching became online, their parents only monitored students sitting at home. Teachers had and have limitations over monitoring during teaching as well as assessment. As a result, the discipline, which students learn at physical schools/colleges, has been impacted severely.
- **Underprepared Teachers and Students:** The new challenge comes with new solutions; for online lecture delivery, applications like Zoom, Google meet, Cisco WebEx were used. Educators as well as learners needed to train themselves with these options. This was not an easy task for all.
- **Technology Training became a challenge:** While using different online platforms to taking online lectures and creating digital content; there were several technical challenges faced by not only teachers but also by the students. To learn new application and to use it at the same time of teaching was one of the difficult task faced by educators. Controls like screen sharing, using white board was difficult at first. Need of proper hardware equipment and good internet connectivity was an added requirement.

#### VI. THE FUTURE:

*Will Virtual teaching and learning method replace teachers?*

One important question arose was, as by using online tools we can carry out teaching learning tasks, what will be the education like in near future? What will happen to teachers' jobs? The E-Learning content is available just one click away for everyone. Classrooms are virtual, learning methods are computerized by using simulations; advanced progress tracking mechanisms are applied to generate reports on progression of learners. Instead of all this, the knowledge a teacher can impart will be most important, because machines cannot clear every doubt, and in the same way a teacher can. Yes, being techno savvy has become important for the teachers to stand this challenge; over the last one and a half year, many institutions have given the opportunity to teachers to learn and master the online and digital tools. Hence, the online tools may not impact very much on teaching job. One thing is for sure, that, teachers have to make them comfortable with technology and have to be adaptive to the new methods.

Vaccinations are going on; things will be under control as large population in India is vaccinated. But what will be the future of the teaching-learning process? Various aspects may not change. The digital content that has been developed over the course of previous year is so useful that we can continue to use them in offline mode also. ICT has emerged more than ever and digitization has entered in the rural roots of India. Teachers and learners both are now familiarized with the new tools and will be able to take on

new challenges using them. New applications are in the market where teachers not only from the country but also from the world are teaching to the students through online mode and in affordable prices. On good side, this is a great opportunity for the teachers who have the knowledge and opportunity to connect with these applications.

With all that said, we may think that, student evaluation systems may again change over time. As we know, now the evaluation is mild and more student oriented as a need of an hour; when the situation will be back to normal, evaluation and assessment will become more balanced.

#### VII. FINAL THOUGHTS:

As Pandemic brought more stress and depression to the teaching fraternity and educational system, it also has given us the opportunity tackle new challenges. We have adapted a lot and trained ourselves for this new normal. We cannot perfectly predict when situation be mild down but we can predict our ability to face it with experience.

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